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FORGOTTEN REALMS

HOMELAND



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R.A. SALVATORE

FORGOTTEN REALMS

HOMELAND



48 PAGES!



REYES OF
MAGNUS
BORG

R.A. SALVATORE

FORGOTTEN REALMS

HOMELAND

THE LEGEND OF DRIZZT BOOK I

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SCRIPT

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PENCILS

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with Derek Fridolf, Serge
LaPointe & Sean Parsons
INKS

Blond
COLORS

Steve Seeley
LETTERS

Deep beneath the surface of the Forgotten Realms lies the Underdark, a vast subterranean world dominated by the DROW, or Dark Elves. Theirs is a social order driven by ambition, where there is neither loyalty nor friendship. Drow culture is lorded over by its MATRON MOTHERS, while males are considered inferior, fit only to serve.

Into this shadowy empire has been born a Drow like none other. DRIZZT DO'URDEN, second son of the vile MATRON MALICE, has been sent to the Academy, where he will spend the next nine years training to be a warrior. Unlike his fellow students, though, Drizzt has been tutored by ZAKNAFEIN, the most feared weapons-master in the realm. In addition to learning Zaknafein's fearsome skills with a sword, Drizzt has also absorbed his thirst for honor – a concept foreign to the Drow. Their last encounter before Drizzt's departure to the Academy ended bitterly – with Zaknafein fearing the youth's innocence would be perverted by the Academy, and Drizzt hurt by his seeming betrayal.

Meanwhile, MATRON MALICE plots her family's ascension, as her enemies gather in the shadows...

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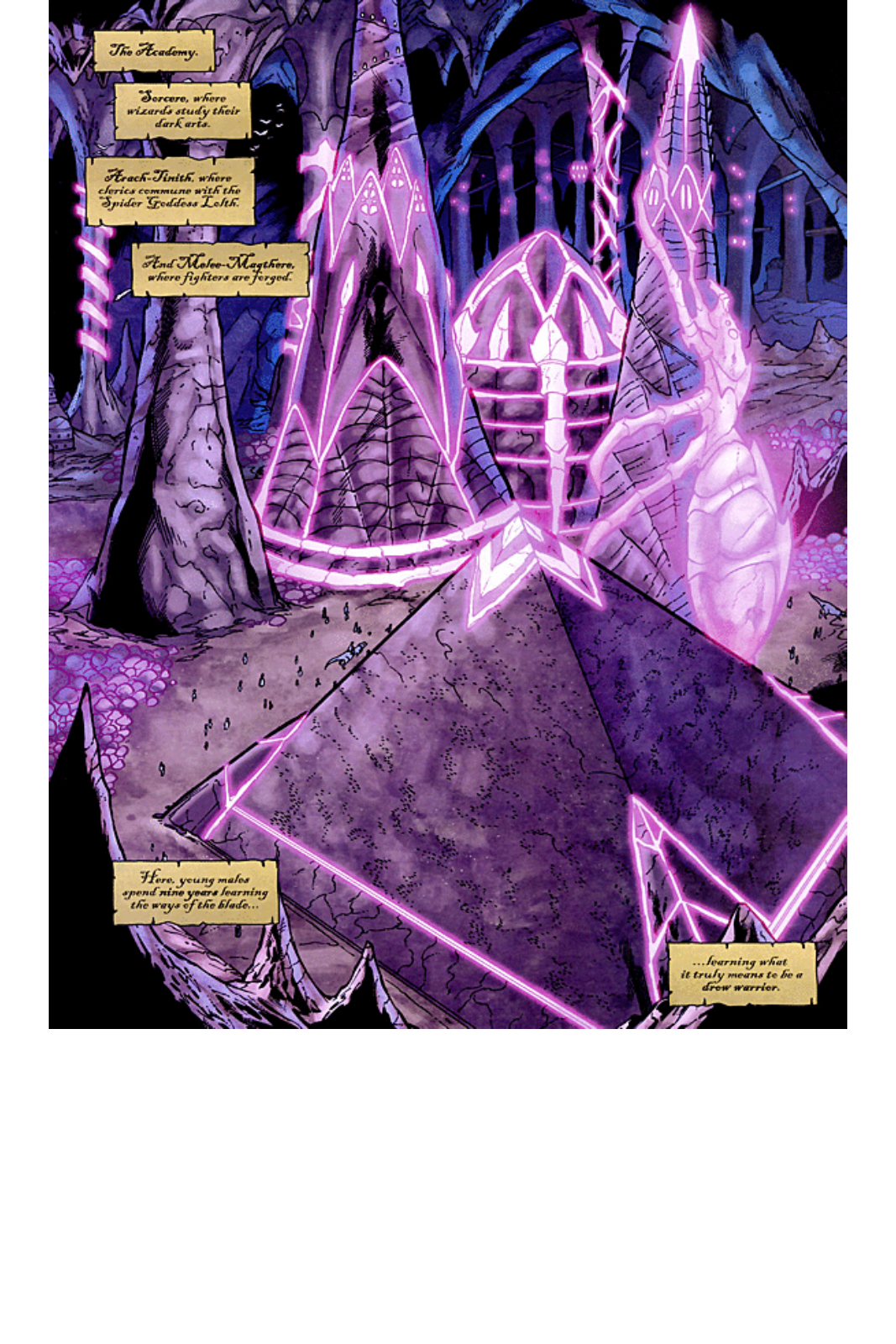
Sam Wells
OFFICE ASSISTANT

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The Academy.

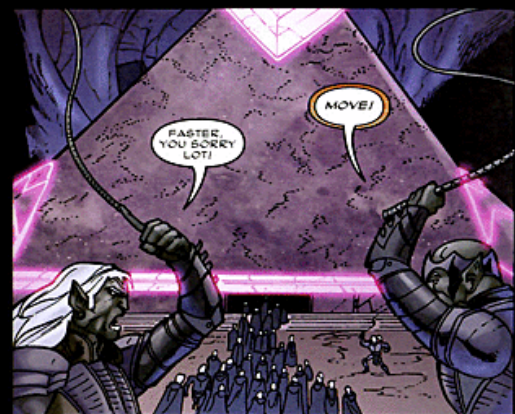
*Dorcero, where
wizards study their
dark arts.*

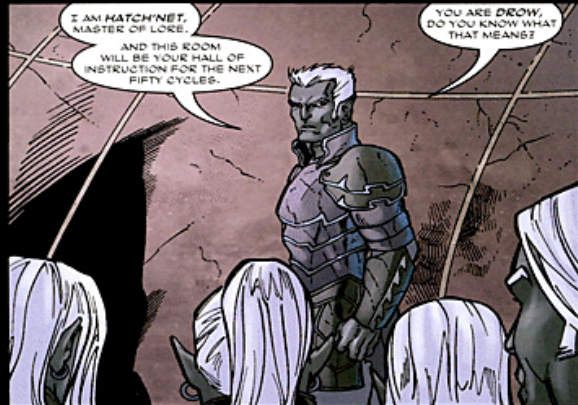
*Arach-Tinith, where
clerics commune with the
Spider Goddess Lethi.*

*And Molor-Magthero,
where fighters are forged.*

*Here, young males
spend nine years learning
the ways of the blade...*

*...learning what
it truly means to be a
drow warrior.*





I AM HATCHNET,
MASTER OF LORE.

AND THIS ROOM
WILL BE YOUR HALL OF
INSTRUCTION FOR THE NEXT
FIFTY CYCLES.

YOU ARE DROW,
DO YOU KNOW WHAT
THAT MEANS?

DO YOU KNOW
WHERE YOU CAME FROM,
AND THE HISTORY OF
OUR PEOPLE?

MEINZBERKANZAN
WAS NOT ALWAYS OUR HOME,
NOR WAS ANY OTHER CAVERN
OF THE UNDERDARK. ONCE WE
WALKED THE SURFACE OF
THE WORLD.



DO YOU KNOW OF
THE SURFACE?

NO,
MASTER.

AN AWFUL
PLACE.
EACH DAY, A
GREAT BALL OF FIRE
RISES INTO THE OPEN
SKY ABOVE...
...BRINGING HOURS
OF A LIGHT GREATER THAN
THE PUNISHING SPELLS OF
THE PRIESTSSES OF
LOTHI



ONCE OUR PEOPLE
WALKED THE SURFACE
OF THE WORLD....

...WE WALKED
BESIDE THE PALE-
SKINNED ELVES, THE
FAERIES!



WE THOUGHT
THE FAERIES OUR
FRIENDS, WE CALLED
THEM KINI!

WE COULD
NOT KNOW, IN OUR
INNOCENCE, THAT THEY
WERE THE EMBODIMENT
OF DECEIT AND
EVIL!



WE COULD NOT KNOW THAT THEY WOULD TURN ON US SUDDENLY--

—SLAUGHTERING OUR CHILDREN AND THE ELDEST OF OUR RACE!

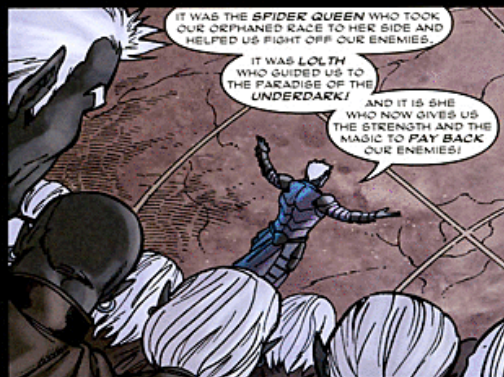


WITHOUT MERCY THE EVIL FAEBIES PURSUED US ACROSS THE SURFACE WORLD!

ALWAYS WE ASKED FOR PEACE, AND ALWAYS WE WERE ANSWERED BY SWORDS AND KILLING ARROWS!



THEN WE FOUND THE GODDESS.



IT WAS THE SPIDER QUEEN WHO TOOK OUR ORPHANED RACE TO HER SIDE AND HELPED US FIGHT OFF OUR ENEMIES.

IT WAS LOTH WHO GUIDED US TO THE PARADISE OF THE UNDERDARK!

AND IT IS SHE WHO NOW GIVES US THE STRENGTH AND THE MAGIC TO PAY BACK OUR ENEMIES!



YOU ARE THE DROW!

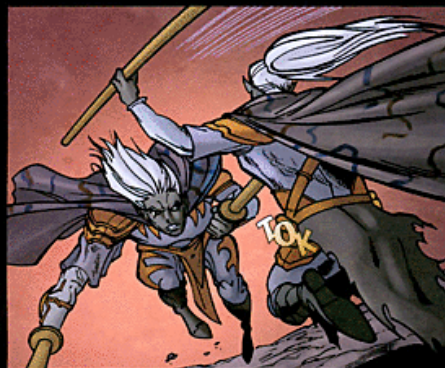
NEVER AGAIN TO BE DOWNTRODDEN. RULERS OF ALL YOU DESIRE. CONQUERORS OF LANDS YOU CHOOSE TO INHABIT!

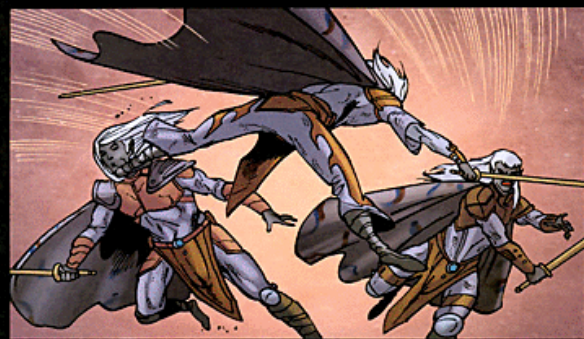


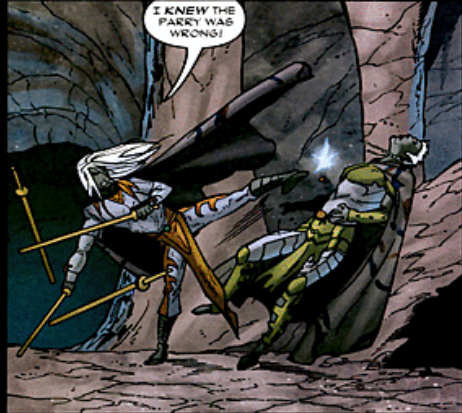
So it went, an endless stream of hateful rhetoric directed against the drow's many enemies: faeries, deep gnomes, duergar dwarves, and all the surface races.

Angry, violent lectures that filled the student's days and haunted their dreams.











ELSEWHERE...

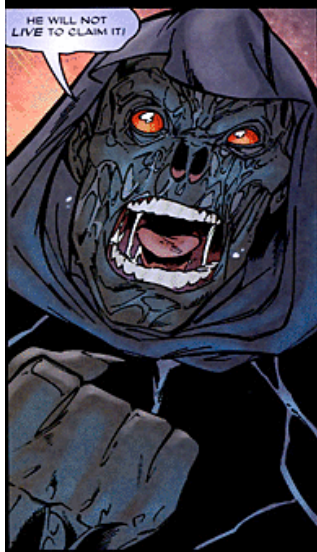
YOU HAVE
SEEN HIM?



EIGHTH IN HIS
CLASS AFTER THE
GRAND MELEE, A FINE
ACHIEVEMENT.

I HAVE.

BY ALL ACCOUNTS,
DRIZZET HAS THE PROWESS TO
BE FIRST. ONE DAY HE WILL
CLAIM THAT TITLE.



HE WILL NOT
LIVE TO CLAIM IT!



HOUSE DO'URDEN PUTS GREAT PRIDE
IN THIS PURPLE-EYED YOUTH, AND
THUS I HAVE DECIDED UPON DRIZZET
AS MY FIRST TARGET FOR
REVENGE.

HIS DEATH
WILL BRING PAIN TO
THAT TREACHEROUS
MATRON MALICE!



YOU WILL
NOT HARM HIM.
YOU WILL NOT EVEN
GO NEAR HIM.



HOUSE DO'URDEN
SLAUGHTERED MY
FAMILY, MASOJI.

I HAVE
WAITED TWO
DECADES---

AND YOU
CAN WAIT A FEW
MORE.



The Academy held many disappointments for Drizzet, particularly in that first year.

To the dark realities of drow society gradually revealed themselves.



He weighed the masters' lectures of hatred and mistrust in both hands, measuring them against the very different logic of his former mentor, Zaknafein.

Searching for the ambiguous truth...



...yet all the while remembering that the only treachery he had ever witnessed was at the hands of his fellow drow.



The physical training was more to Drizzet's liking.



Here, he could free himself of disturbing questions of truth and perceived truth.



Here, he excelled.

Finally, it was
time for the second
grand melee.

KELNOZZI!

Where luck
bestowed a measure
of justice upon
Drizet.

I HAVE NOT
FORGOTTEN YOUR
TRICK.

YOU ARE
DEFEATED, SON OF
HOUSE KENAFIN.

Then Drizet was
off into the shadows.

This was his arena,
the place where he felt most
comfortable, and he was
up to the challenge.

*In two hours,
only five
competitors
remained.*



*And after another
two hours of cat and mouse,
it came down to only two.*





While Drizzet took little pride in his victory that second year...



...he took great satisfaction in the continued growth of his fighting skills.

He practiced every waking hour.

His scimitars becoming his only friends, the only things he dared trust.



He won the grand melee again the third year, and the year after that.



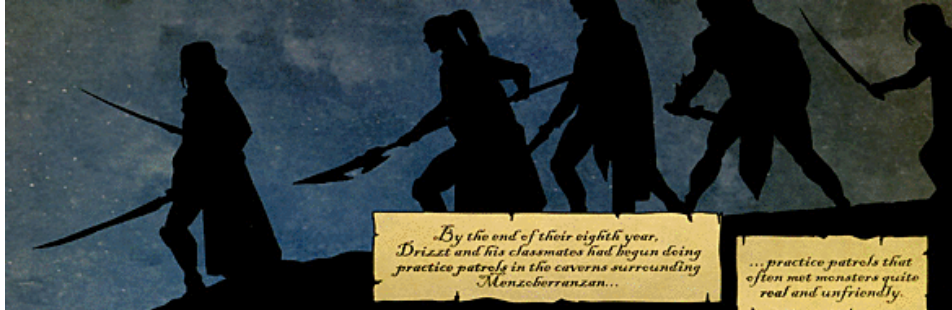
The next year, they placed him into the grand melee of students three years his senior.



He won that one, too.

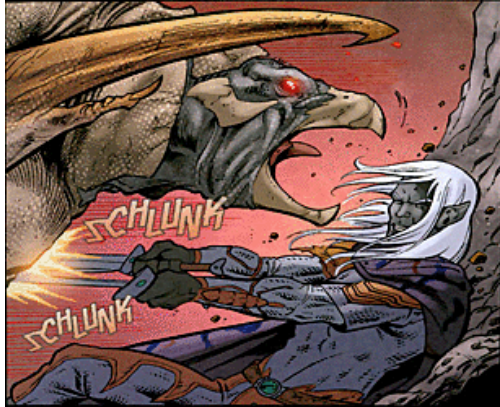
And thus did the years pass.

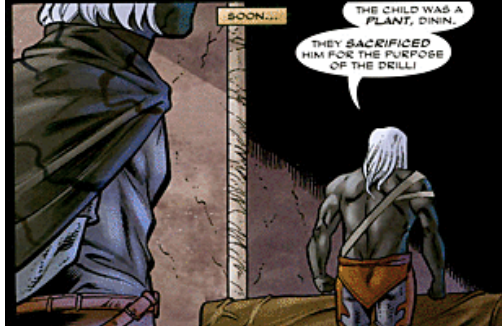










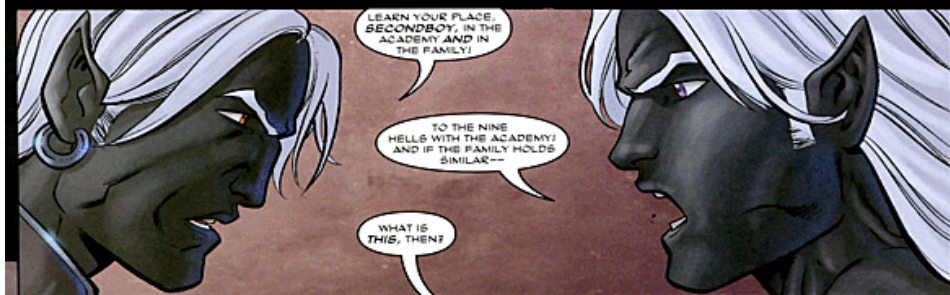


SOON...

THE CHILD WAS A
PLANT, DININ.
THEY SACRIFICED
HIM FOR THE PURPOSE
OF THE DRILL!



ENOUGH!



LEARN YOUR PLACE,
SECONDBOY, IN THE
ACADEMY AND IN
THE FAMILY!

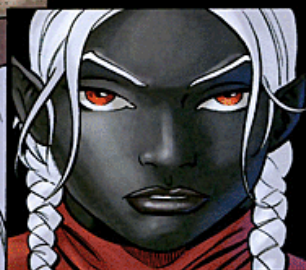
TO THE NINE
HELLS WITH THE ACADEMY!
AND IF THE FAMILY HOLDS
SIMILAR--

WHAT IS
THIS, THEN?



CONSIDER YOURSELVES
FORTUNATE, FOR I'LL NOT TELL
MATRON MALICE OF YOUR STUPID
INFIGHTING. SHE WOULD NOT BE
MERCIFUL, I PROMISE YOU.

WHY HAVE YOU
COME UNANNOUNCED
TO MELEE-MAD THERE,
VIENAZ?



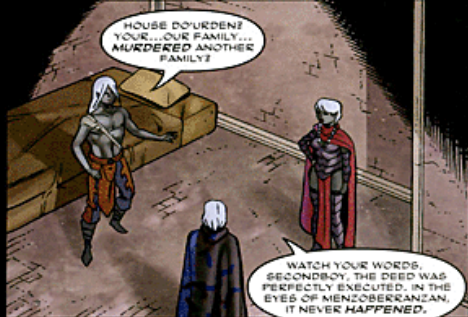
TO WAEN MY
BROTHERS.
THERE
ARE EUNICES OF
VENGEANCE AGAINST
OUR HOUSE.

BY WHAT
FAMILY? FOR
WHAT DEED?

FOR DEVIL, I
WOULD PRESUME.

AS TO THE FAMILY,
LITTLE IS KNOWN... THE
RUMORS ARE VAGUE, BUT YOU
BOTH MUST KEEP YOUR GUARD
ESPECIALLY HIGH IN THE
COMING MONTHS.



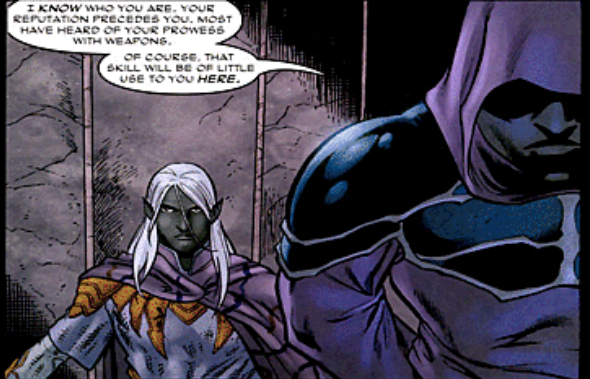




I AM
DRIZET.

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE. YOUR
REPUTATION PRECEDES YOU. MOST
HAVE HEARD OF YOUR PROWESS
WITH WEAPONS.

OF COURSE, THAT
SKILL WILL BE OF LITTLE
USE TO YOU HERE.



FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS,
I AM TO TUTOR YOU IN THE
WIZARDLY ARTS.

THE STUDIES
WILL TEST YOUR MIND
AND YOUR HEART--MEAGER
METAL WEAPONS WILL
PLAY NO PART.

MAGIC IS
THE TRUE POWER
OF OUR PEOPLE!



I WILL SHOW YOU
MANY MARVELS. ARTIFACTS
BEYOND YOUR BELIEF. SPELLS
OF A POWER BEYOND YOUR
EXPERIENCE!

AND MAY
I KNOW YOUR
NAME?



MASOJ
HUN'ETT, OF HOUSE
HUNETT.



*Despite Masoj's constant
self-glorification, Drizet actually
found his time under the wizard's
tutelage the best of his stay
at the Academy.*



Drizzet found he was quite proficient in the ways of magic.

In but a few weeks, he could manage several cantrips and a few lesser spells.

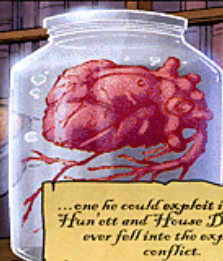


And he found great enjoyment in many of the things Masej showed him, particularly the enchanted items housed in the tower of Dercore.



For his part, Masej watched Drizzet carefully.

His mother had arranged for him to be the young warrior's tutor, and Masej was determined to find some weakness in Drizzet...



...so he could exploit it if House Hun'ott and House Do'Urden ever fell into the expected conflict.

Several times, Masej saw an opportunity to eliminate Drizzet, but Matron Si'Nafay's instructions on this matter had been explicit: he was not to be harmed.

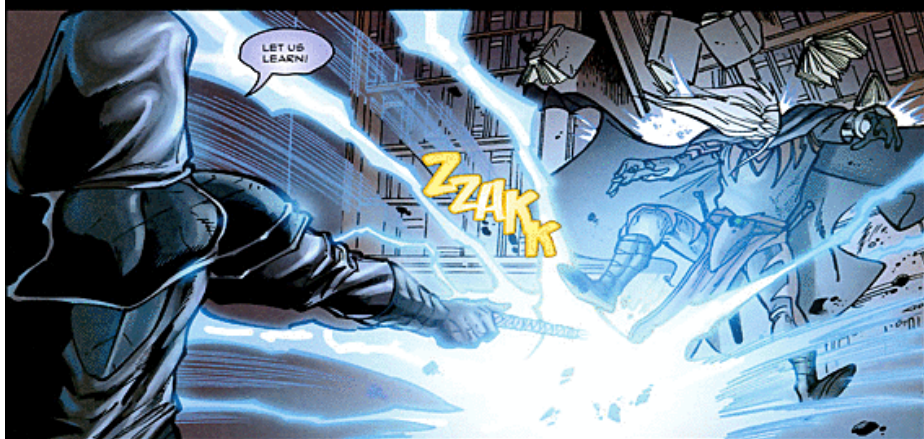
And Masej was not fool enough to disobey a Matron Mother.



Others, however, did not exhibit such self-control...

MY STUDENT MASEJ HAS INFORMED ME OF YOUR FINE PROGRESS.







ENOUGH, GUENHWYAR!



MASOO, WHAT--?

MY PET--



--SUMMONED FROM A MYSTICAL PLANE USING THIS ONYX FIGURINE.

SHE IS... BEAUTIFUL.



HAVE YOU LEARNED YOUR LESSON THIS DAY?

I AM NOT CERTAIN OF THE POINT OF ALL THIS.



A DISPLAY OF THE WEAKNESS OF MAGIC.

TO SHOW YOU THE VULNERABILITY OF A MAGE OBSESSED...WITH SPELLCASTING.



COME, LET US BOTHER THE MASTER NO MORE.

BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND--

THEN OBVIOUSLY YOU NEED TO STUDY HARDER.



WAIT FOR ME IN OUR PRACTICE HALL, AND I WILL SHOW YOU MORE OF GUENHWYVAR, MY MAGICAL PET.



AND AS FOR YOU!

I WAS WEAK, I KNOW IT, MATRON SINAFAY WILL—



NOT HEAR OF THIS.

IF I TELL MY MOTHER SHE WILL KILL YOU, AND THEN THERE WOULD BE NO BASIS FOR OUR COMING WAR WITH DO'URDEN.

YOU HAVE NO GRUDGE AGAINST DO'URDEN.



NOT THE HOUSE, HIM.

HE... DOES NOT BELONG.

I HAVE WATCHED DRIZZT FOR TEN YEARS, STUDYING HIS MOVEMENT AND ATTITUDES. HE DISPLAYS NO AMBITION, YET ALWAYS EMERGES VICTORIOUS, AT THE TOP OF HIS CLASS.

THERE IS NO SACRIFICE IN HIS ACTIONS, NO SCARS FOR THE GREAT GAINS HE MAKES.

IT IS ALL TOO EASY FOR HIM.



SO WORRY NOT, ALTON DEVIR, ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE.

WE WILL BOTH TAKE GREAT PLEASURE IN THE DEATH OF DRIZZT DO'URDEN.

If Drizzt's six months at Sercero had been the most enjoyable, his last six in Arch-Smith, the school of Lath, were the least.

Those days were filled with an endless series of eulogies to the Spider Queen, tales and prophecies of her power and the rewards she bestowed upon loyal worshippers.

Though a more appropriate term, Drizzt thought, would be slaves.

Still, he suffered through it all, until the day of graduation finally arrived...

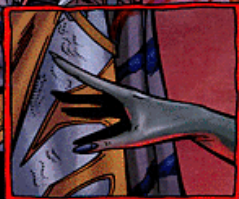
...a day that would bring perhaps the most repulsive event in his nine years at the Academy: the Ceremony of Graduation.

BE-GO SINEE CALAMAY...

COME, YOUNG WARRIOR--
SHOW THE SPIDER QUEEN
YOUR DEVOTION.

UNTIL YOU OFFER UP
YOURSELF, BODY AND SOUL,
YOU REMAIN A BOY.

Ugh...







SHORTLY...

VIERNA, WHERE
ARE WE?

DOWN THERE, DO
YOU SEE THEM?

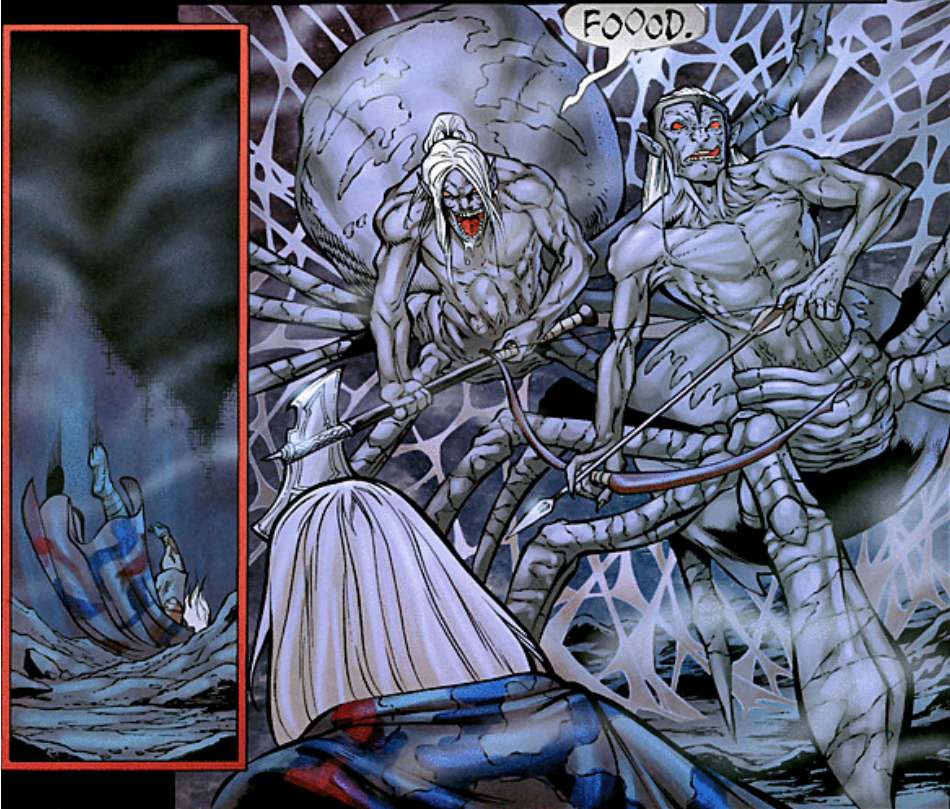


DRIDERS, FORGAKEN OF
LOTH. THE SPIDER QUEEN IS
NOT A MERCIFUL DEITY.



GOODBYE, LITTLE
BROTHER.

THIS IS A
BETTER FATE THAN
YOU DESERVE.



FOOOD.



HEAR MY WORDS,
DRIEZZ DO'VDEN.



VIERNA BROUGHT YOU TO THAT
PLACE TO HAVE YOU KILLED. SHE
SHOWED YOU MERCY.

BUT I UNDERSTAND THE
WILL OF THE SPIDER QUEEN BETTER
THAN SHE. IN THESE DANGEROUS
TIMES, WE CANNOT AFFORD TO
LOSE ONE OF OUR HOUSE.



STILL, IF YOU EVER SPEAK ILL
OF LOLTH, OUR GODDESS, AGAIN,
I WILL TAKE YOU BACK TO THAT
PLACE MYSELF.

NOT TO
KILL YOU, BUT TO MAKE
YOU ONE OF THEM,
A DRIER.



DO NOT DISAPPOINT
ME AGAIN.

Drizzt was graduated on schedule and with the highest honors in his class.

He suspected that none of those present at the Ceremony of Graduation even remembered that he had left.

SO I AM HOME.

FOR WHATEVER THAT MEANS.

GREETINGS, PRINCE DRIZZT. WE HAVE HEARD OF THE HONORS YOU ACHIEVED AT NIELEE-MASTHERE. YOUR SKILL DID HOUSE DO'URDEN PROUD.

GLAD, I AM, THAT YOU DID NOT BECOME DRIDER FOOD.

MY SISTERS, I HAVE LEARNED MY PLACE.

NEVER WILL I DISAPPOINT HOUSE DO'URDEN IN SUCH A WAY AGAIN.

ALL PRAISE THE SPIDER QUEEN!

WHAT HAVE I DONE?

A FINER BLADE YOU WOULD BE HAD YOU TASTED DRIZZT'S BLOOD, TO KEEP HIM FROM BEING CORRUPTED.

I HAVE FAILED IN THE ONE ACT THAT COULD HAVE BROUGHT MEANING TO MY PITIFUL EXISTENCE.

THE SECONDBOY OF HOUSE DO'URDEN LIVES, BUT DRIZZT DO'URDEN, MY INNOCENT TWO-HANDS, IS LONG DEAD.

ALL BECAUSE I AM A COWARD!

Of all his family, the person Drizzt feared seeing the most was Zaknafein.

Once, Drizzt thought the weapons master would be his salvation against the dark realities around him.

But that was before he learned of the pleasure Zaknafein took in murdering drow.

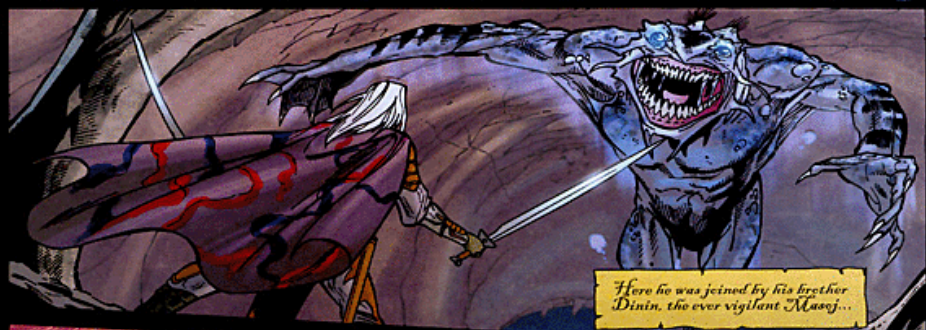
Drizzt knew what his sisters and mother were, and how to appease them.

Only Zaknafein pretended to be what he was not, a fact which both confused and angered Drizzt more than he had ever thought possible.



Drizzt spent only two days at home before joining one of the many patrol groups that kept the caverns around Menzoberranzan safe.

ZZZAK



Here he was joined by his brother Dinn, the ever vigilant Maorj...

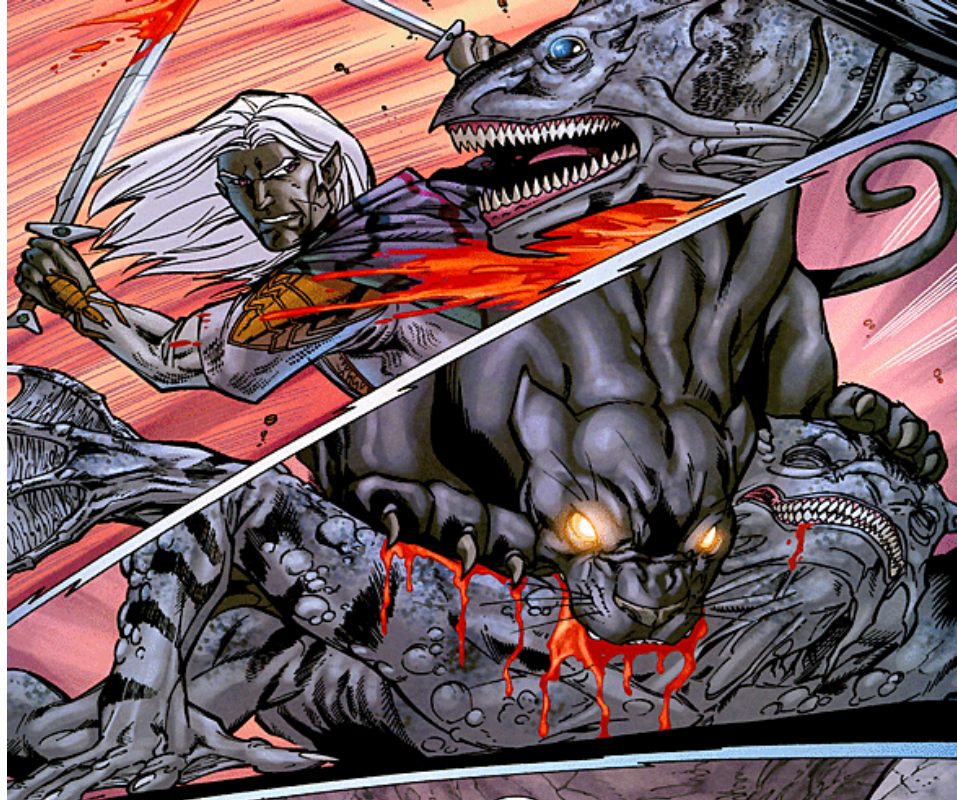


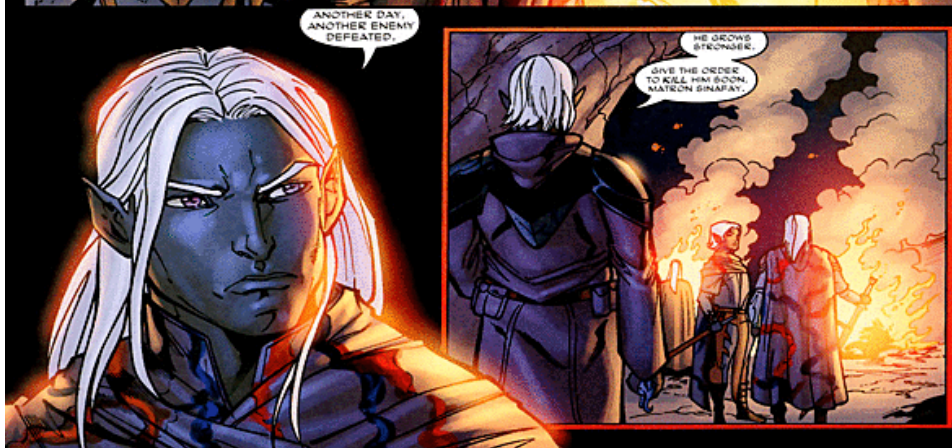
NOW!

...and a new friend.



RRRAWR









VERY WELL, BUT SURELY YOU BOTH KNOW THAT THE COUNCIL CANNOT ENACT PUNISHMENT UPON A HOUSE FOR A DEED COMMITTED SO LONG AGO.

WHY WOULD WE DESIRE TO? MATRON MALICE DO'URDEN SITS IN THE FAVOR OF THE SPIDER QUEEN. HER HOUSE SHOWS GREAT PROMISE.

HOUSE DO'URDEN DOES INDEED SHOW *PROMISE*, WITH FOUR HIGH PRIESTESSES, TWO FORMER MASTERS AT MEEB—MAGTHERE, FOUR HUNDRED TRAINED SOLDIERS...

...AND, OF COURSE, THEIR SECONDBOY, FIRST GRADUATE OF HIS CLASS.



YET I DO NOT ASK YOU TO ATTACK THEM, JUST TO CLOSE YOUR EYES.

ALTON IS A HUN'ETT NOW, UNDER MY PROTECTION. HE DEMANDS VENGEANCE FOR THIS ACT, AND WE ARE BOUND TO HELP HIM ACHIEVE IT.



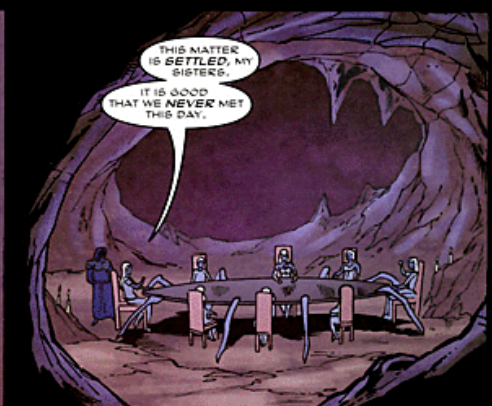
IS THIS VENGEANCE OR FEAR?

IT WOULD SEEM TO MY EARS THAT THE MATRON OF HOUSE HUN'ETT USES THIS PITIFUL DEVIL CREATURE FOR HER OWN GAIN. PERHAPS TO ELIMINATE A GROWING RIVAL?

BE IT VENGEANCE OR PRUDENCE, MY CLAIM—ALTON DEVIE'S CLAIM—MUST BE DEEMED LEGITIMATE.



INDEED.



THIS MATTER IS SETTLED, MY SISTERS.

IT IS GOOD THAT WE NEVER MET THIS DAY.

LATER...

WE HAVE BEEN
CHOSEN FOR A SURFACE
RAID!

THE FIRST PATROL
GROUP IN A DECADE
TO BE AWARDED SUCH
AN HONOR!



BUT WHERE ARE MASOO?
GUENHWYVAR?

BY LAW, NO WIZARDS ARE ALLOWED
ON THE SURFACE, AND IF MASOO STAYS, SO DOES
THE CAT. SHE BELONGS TO HIM, AFTER ALL.

COME, WE'VE A LONG
MARCH AHEAD!

THE SURFACE...

The members of the patrol group made their way through the twisting tunnels and giant caverns, moving ever upward.

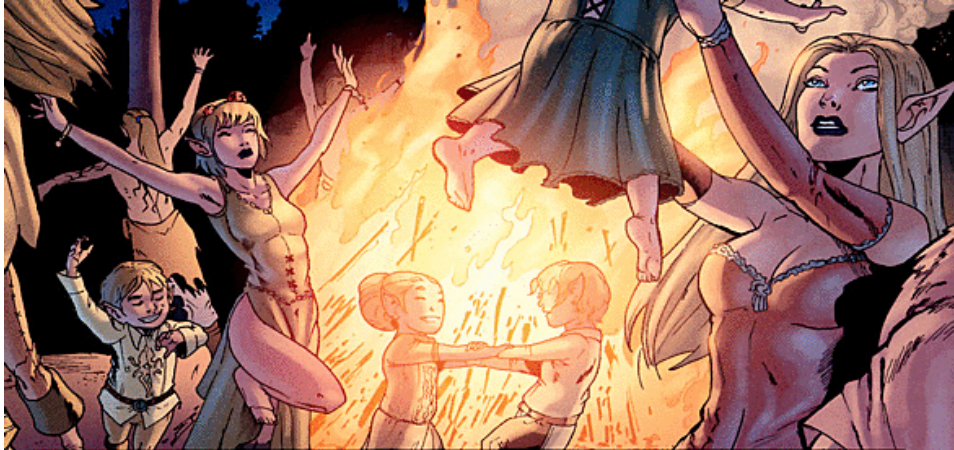
In time, breezes wafted past them--not the sulfur-smelling hot winds rising from the magma of deep earth, but moist air scented with tantalizing aromas of spring.

For most drows this was a time of fear, as Master Hatch met a dark sterios of the evil surface echoed in their minds...

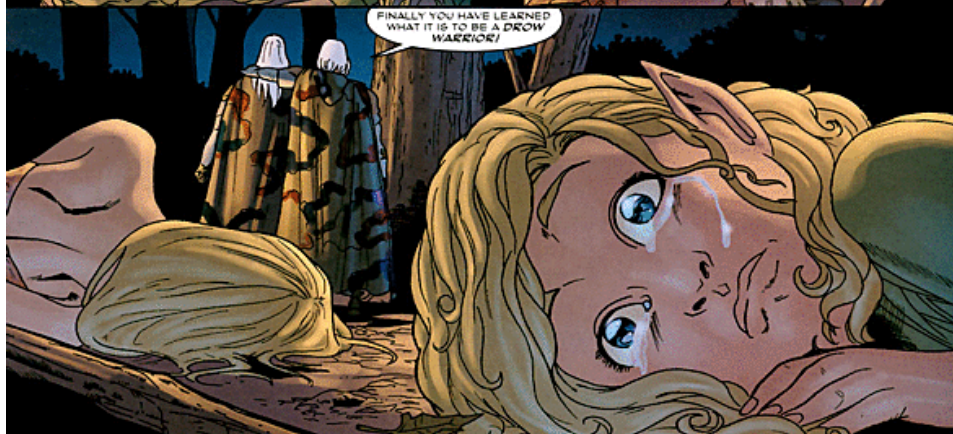
...but Drizet felt something far different as he beheld the sights and sounds of this new world.

He was excited.

THERE, AS LOTI PROMISED!









NEXT: GUENHWYVAR

NEXT
ISSUE

R.A. SALVATORE

FORGOTTEN REALMS

HOMELAND



MAGIC AND LOSS

COMING IN AUGUST FROM DDP



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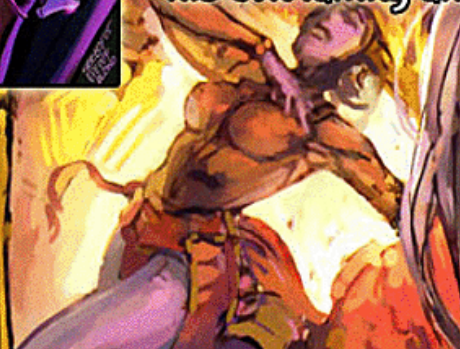
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Save for his mentor's
dedication to justice,
Academy of Menzoberr
in the art of death
Treachery. Ambition
his evil family and





RE FORGOTTEN REALMS

MELAND

r Zaknafein, Drizzt is alone amongst his people in his
tice. But now he has entered Melee-Magthere - the
oberranzan. Here, young drow warriors are schooled
dly combat - and the corrupt ways of their people:
ion. Murder. His choice is simple: bow to the will of
d become twisted by these teachings - or retain his
honor and become an outcast ...

tekScan 154